

## Welcome Back!

Welcome back to DSU; I hope you all had a fantastic summer.

This year, we are starting off in the physical and forensic sciences with a lot of excitement, and some wonderful opportunities that I hope you all will take advantage of. We have 38 majors as of the writing of this note, and for the second year in a row, our upper level course Organic Chemistry has over 10 students (fifteen, to be precise). I use this course as a gauge of not only the number of majors we have, but also how they are advancing. See, according to the Board of Regents, we are not supposed to offer classes that have fewer than ten students (some of you already in the upper levels have seen this; it is the reason you have taken so many “special topics” courses which are exempt from this requirement). I’ve long expected that we would get many majors taking forensic or physical science as freshmen, with fewer of them staying in the major, so the more students in organic chemistry we have is a better indicator of growth in the program than sheer number of majors.

OK, so before we get to news, let’s expound upon some of your upcoming opportunities. First and foremost, *I very strongly encourage all of our physical and forensic science majors to join the **Math and Science Club***. Believe me, you will get plenty of dry discussions of science in plenty of classes; the Math and Science Club is your opportunity to discuss recent advances in science informally, and generally hobnob with your fellow physical and forensic science students. We have several exciting events planned that you might really enjoy. Secondly *check this gazette regularly*. I will try to keep up this year with requests for our majors for graduate programs and other opportunities, and even if you are not ready for this, it does help you to recognize the types of opportunities that we have. Our programs, as it turns out, are very powerful, and our graduates are highly sought after, and this is just a way to remember that. Finally, for crying out loud, *apply for scholarships and grants when the time arrives*. Every year I give money to the Foundation (the charitable arm of DSU) specifically for physical and forensic science majors, and, frequently, that money goes unawarded simply because nobody applies for it!

There is a lot of great news this year, but none so exciting as the opening of the **Homestake Mine Lab**. This lab, built in the mine that originally was the Black Hills Gold operation, is the next BIG project in physics. It will put a lab in South Dakota that is on the order of magnitude of CERN, Argonne, and Los Alamos. Our own Dr. Barbara Szczerbinska is closely affiliated with this project, and I hope she will write a few words for us for our gazette.

OK, I’m just scraping the tip of the iceberg here; there is a lot more that we will probably discuss in the future, so keep an eye on this site. By the way, the challenge on the gazette main page has, to date, not been claimed!!